**IN THE CLAIMS**

At the time of the Office Action, claims 1-11 and 13 were pending. No claim is newly amended, canceled, withdrawn or added herein. Claims 1-11 and 13 remain pending.

1. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method of pre-processing of a machine-readable form with non-fixed fields layout, the method comprising:

acquiring a bit-mapped image of the machine-readable form filled in with print in one or more non-fixed data input fields;

identifying at least one form model, the at least one form model containing spatial and parametric properties of objects thereof;

preliminarily assigning at least one object of the form as a reference point for spatial binding of at least one non-fixed data input field thereof;

eliminating any skew, distortion and noise in the bit-mapped image;

parsing the bit-mapped image into regions; and

defining a spatial location of at least one non-fixed data input field relative to at least one reference point, wherein said defining the location of the at least one non-fixed data input field comprises:

selecting a non-fixed data input field to search in the at least one form model;

accepting from the at least one form model at least one reference point property for a spatial relative reference of the said data input field;

searching and locating said at least one reference point on the form bit-mapped image;

searching and locating the said data input field on the form bit-mapped image relative to at least one reference point taking into account all spatial and parametrical properties described in the form model; and

identifying each data input field position in the case of multiple data input fields.

2. (ORIGINAL) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the said reference point is represented by a text region.

3. (ORIGINAL) The method as recited in claim 2, wherein the said text region is additionally subjected to a text recognition.

4. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein in the case of multiple data input fields the said identification of each data input field is performed via setting up and accepting of hypotheses and compliance estimation of the form model.

5. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method as recited in claim 4, wherein an additional information about each of said non-fixed data input field is used.

6. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein a non-fixed data input field may be used as a reference point.

7. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein identifying each data input field in the case of multiple data input fields is performed at least partly manually.

8. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the spatial location of a reference point is not fixed from a first scan of the machine-readable form to a second scan of the machine-readable form.

9. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein one reference point is used for spatial binding of more than one data input field.

10. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the spatial binding of one data input field is performed relative to more than one reference point.

11. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein a reference point comprises more than one form object.

12. (CANCELED)

13. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the identifying each data input field position in the case of multiple data input fields is a profound identification.